



## Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs for People who have Prescription Coverage from an **Employer or Union**

Starting January 1, 2006, Medicare will offer prescription drug coverage for everyone with Medicare. Each employer or union will decide how they want to work with the new Medicare drug coverage. Whether you are currently employed or retired, it's important to understand how your employer or union drug coverage will work. Talk to your employer or union's benefits administrator before you make a decision about whether to get Medicare prescription drug coverage.

### **What do I need to know?**

- Your employer or union must send you information about your current prescription drug coverage by November 14, 2005.
- The information will let you know how your current coverage compares to the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage. This information is important because it can affect the decision you will need to make this fall about if and when you sign up for Medicare prescription drug coverage.
- If your employer or union has determined that your current coverage, **on average, is at least as good as** the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage:
  - You can keep it as long as it is still offered by your employer or union; and
  - You won't have to pay a higher premium if you don't join a Medicare prescription drug plan until after May 15, 2006.



## What do I need to know? (continued)

- If your employer or union has determined that your current coverage, **on average, is not at least as good as** standard Medicare prescription drug coverage:
  - You can keep it as long as it is still offered by your employer or union and choose not to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan. If you don't join by May 15, 2006, in most cases, your next chance to enroll will be November 15–December 31 of each year. But, your monthly premium will go up at least 1% for every month you waited to enroll.
  - You can join a Medicare prescription drug plan in place of, or in addition to, your current employer or union coverage. You will need to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan that meets your needs between November 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006 to get this coverage at the lowest premium.
- **Remember, contact your employer or union's benefits administrator before you make any decisions about your prescription drug coverage, or if you don't get this information by November 14, 2005.**

**Caution:** If you drop your employer or union coverage, you may not be able to get it back. You also may not be able to drop your employer or union *drug* coverage without also dropping your employer or union *health* coverage.

## How can I get more information?

- Contact your employer or union's benefits administrator.
- Detailed information will be available in October 2005. You can look at the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see your copy of the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook for their telephone number).
- Look for local Medicare-related events.